

Public faces hardship as health insurance centre moves to Bambolim

Senior citizens say it's a problem travelling long distance by bus; flay online renewal option; point out that many elderly individuals are unfamiliar with smartphones

Team Herald

PANJIM: The relocation of the Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana (DDSSY) centre from Panjim to Bambolim has led to inconvenience, especially for residents of island villages like Diwar and Sao Mathias.

Residents who rely on DDSSY services claim that the centre was moved to Bambolim before last year's Lok Sabha elections and has since been functioning with inadequate manpower and infrastructure. They argue that this move contradicts the government's initiatives like Swayampurna Goa and Sarkar Tumchya Dari, which promote accessible public services.

Prasad Harmalkar, a resident of Diwar, expressed his frustration, stating, "It is causing inconvenience to the people and I really do not understand the rea-

“It is causing inconvenience to the people and I really do not understand the reasoning behind shifting the centre to Bambolim. The government seems indifferent to how its policies impact the common man”
— Prasad Harmalkar, Diwar resident

“The authorities are searching for a new location in Panjim to re-establish a Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana centre in the city”
— DDSSY official

soning behind shifting the centre to Bambolim. The government seems indifferent to how its policies impact the common people. If policies create difficulties, what is the point of having them? The DDSSY scheme benefits the elderly the most, but now, they must travel to Panjim and then to Bambolim just to renew a card. What guarantee do they have that the renewal

will be completed in a single day?”

He further criticised the online renewal option, pointing out that many elderly individuals are not familiar with smartphones. "How can you expect an old man, who doesn't even know how to operate a mobile phone, to renew his card online? Instead of forcing people to adapt, why doesn't the govern-

“It is really tough for islanders to travel to Bambolim, requiring at least two bus changes. We leave home not even knowing if our cards will be renewed the same day. The Health Department should organise camps at panchayats for a few days to make the renewal process easier”
— Jerry De Souza, Sao Mathias villager

ment change and bring the service to their doorsteps? The best solution would be to establish DDSSY centres at the panchayat level itself," he suggested.

Another resident, Jerry De Souza, highlighted the transportation difficulties. "It is really tough for islanders to travel to Bambolim, requiring at least two bus changes. We leave home not even knowing if

our cards will be renewed the same day. The Health Department should organise camps at panchayats for a few days to make the renewal process easier," he said.

A resident who preferred to remain anonymous added, "On one hand, the centre is too far, and on the other, hospitals refuse to provide services unless the card is renewed. Expecting people from all over Tiswadi taluka to travel to Bambolim is unreasonable. Many of us cannot renew our cards online as there are no cyber cafes nearby, and network connectivity is poor in some areas."

Meanwhile, sources from the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) have confirmed that authorities are searching for a new location in Panjim to re-establish a DDSSY centre in the city.

Panel formed to examine no-detention policy for Class V to VIII

Team Herald

PANJIM: The State government has constituted a committee to study the No-Detention Policy and determine whether it should be implemented for Class V to VIII from the new academic year.

The committee is headed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Director (Administration), Sarita Ghadge, comprises teachers, academicians, and other stakeholders.

Director of SCERT, Meghana Shetgaonkar, stated that the committee will adopt a strategic approach to reduce the number of dropouts in classes V and IX. "We have adopted an amended No-Detention Policy. We are in favour of the Centre scrapping the policy, but we will withdraw it systematically and not haphazardly," she said.

According to Shetgaonkar, "The committee has started

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— Meghana Shetgaonkar, Director SCERT

its work and is examining the amended No-Detention Policy. If the committee submits its report and it is accepted by the government, then we will implement the new policy from the academic year 2025-26."

"We want to ensure that no child receiving elementary education is detained in any class. A competency test for such grades is also on the cards," she added.

The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, was amended in 2019 to eliminate the No-Detention Policy. However, the rules to implement the amended Act were delayed and passed in 2024 to align them with the National Curriculum

Framework (NCF) following the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Following the RTE Amendment Act, 2019, 18 States and Union Territories have abolished the policy. Goa, however, continues to follow the No Detention Policy from Class I to VIII.

Shetgaonkar said that the Government of India has given broader guidelines and the States are allowed to customise it as per its requirement so as to help such students reach the required learning levels.

The No-Detention Policy was introduced under the Right To Education Act (RTE) in 2009.

Petitioner proposes safety measures for Porvorim elevated corridor

Team Herald

PANJIM: Advocate Moses Pinto has submitted a set of recommendations to assist the High Court of Bombay at Goa in identifying a practical and safe resolution to concerns raised regarding the construction of the six-lane elevated corridor at Porvorim.

Adv Pinto, who had filed a public interest litigation (PIL) writ petition, submitted his suggestions in compliance with the High Court's directive. The court had instructed the petitioner to present concrete proposals to help identify a feasible and secure solution to

the grievances highlighted. According to Pinto, his recommendations are based on site inspections conducted throughout March 2025, along with photographic documentation.

Among his key suggestions is the installation of metal barricading with high-visibility reflective markings around all active work zones and roadside debris, accompanied by standard cautionary signage. He has also stressed that no precast segment or girder should be lifted, swung, or installed over an active carriageway unless the route is completely

closed and alternative diversions are in place.

To ensure safer traffic movement until the corridor's completion, Pinto has proposed that all construction zones should feature clearly delineated two-way temporary lanes, marked with painted lines and reinforced dividers. Additionally, he has recommended the immediate removal of barricades displaying non-safety advertisements, such as casino promotions, and their replacement with standard road safety graphics.

Further, he has advised that water tankers should be deployed to sprinkle

road margins regularly, particularly during peak hours, and that stockpiles of soil should either be removed or covered using jute or plastic sheets.

Wherever the tarred surface has been excavated for underground cable or drainage installation, a minimum three-metre buffer should be maintained with structured barricades, with warning signage placed 20 metres in advance.

Adv Pinto has also recommended that the Goa State Pollution Control Board be directed to conduct air quality testing for PM2.5 and PM10 levels.

UNATTENDED & UNSAFE!



A telephone junction box lies unattended on MG Road, Panjim, posing a hazard to pedestrians and motorists

Extortionist on the run falls into Delhi police net after 9 months

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Delhi Police arrested Imad Khan, a 33-year-old accused in a Rs 30 lakh high-profile extortion case, who had escaped from the custody of the Goa police while in transit at Mumbai Airport in June 2024.

According to officials, Khan, a resident of Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, was apprehended on March 29, following a joint operation between Goa and Delhi Police. He had managed to evade arrest for nine months by frequently changing his location.

According to police, Khan and his associates extorted Rs 30 lakh from a businessman in Mapusa by posing as officers from the Delhi Police's Narcotics Cell and had been detained on June 19 last year but managed to escape after a brief scuffle with Goa Police officers and CISF personnel.

Mapusa Police gathered key intelligence on Khan's whereabouts. Recognising that his movements extended beyond Goa, they coordinated with the Cyber Cell of the Delhi Crime Branch, providing crucial details. He is the sixth accused arrested in the extortion case.

Mother, daughter injured in Sanguem hit-and-run incident

Team Herald

PANJIM: A mother and daughter who were riding on a scooter had a miraculous escape, when they were hit by a rod carrying truck at Dhanolem, Kevona in Sanguem Taluka.

The driver fled the scene without stopping, leaving the victims—Lata Gaonkar (50) and her daughter Priti Gaonkar (25)—bleeding on the roadside. A passerby immediately alerted the 108 ambulance service, and locals rushed to assist the injured duo.

Speaking to O Herald, Lata Gaonkar recounted the ordeal, stating that she sustained injuries after being struck by the rods protruding from the truck. "The truck did not stop even after the accident," she said.

Authorities are investigating the incident, and efforts are underway to identify the vehicle involved in the hit-and-run.

POLITICAL CONTROVERSY

Team Herald

PANJIM: In a sharp rebuke to the Maharashtra Gomatantak Party (MGP), Bharatiya Janata Party MLA and Art and Culture Minister from Priol constituency, Govind Gaude, has reiterated that the BJP does not require the support of any party to contest elections.

"The BJP does not need the support of any party. This is not a new statement—I said the same back in 2007 when Laxmikant Parsekar was party president and Manohar Parrikar was Leader of the Opposition," Gaude stated.

Taking pot shots at the MGP, Gaude further added, "Some people considered me a child at that time, but I had firmly stated that if the BJP contests elections with its full

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— Govind Gaude, minister

strength, it can take on any party. I maintained this position in 2017 and again in 2022, and I stand by it today—we do not need any party's support."

Gaude's remarks come in the wake of Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's recent indirect warning to the MGP, stating that the BJP would contest the Priol seat, and that those unwilling to accept this should reconsider their place in the alliance.

The statement regarding Priol hints as a setback for MGP Presi-

BJP does not need MGP's support, says minister

dent Deepak Dhavlikar, who has been eyeing this constituency to revive his political career. The BJP's stand is a crystal clear political boost for sitting MLA and Art and Culture Minister Govind Gaude.

For years, the MGP was the natural ally of the BJP and the alliance remained strong in early elections, but today the former has found in a weaker bargaining position.

Responding to this, MGP leader and minister in Sawant's cabinet, Sudin Dhavlikar, suggested that the Chief Minister's statement was primarily aimed at appeasing BJP workers.

"The decisions regarding the alliance and candidate selection for Priol will ultimately be taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP President JP Nadda, and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. I fully trust their judgment," Dhavlikar asserted.

Man found dead in Sanguem canal

Team Herald

MARGAO: A 57-year-old man, Prakash Gaonkar, a resident of Cotarlim, Sanguem, was found dead in a water canal at Cotarlim, Sanguem, in what appears to be a case of accidental drowning.

Sanguem Police stated that they were alerted about the incident by the beat police. A team was dispatched to the location, where, with the help of the Fire and Emergency Services from Curchorem, Gaonkar's body was retrieved from the canal. An inquest panchanama was conducted at the scene.

The deceased was identified by his nephew. A post-mortem exami-

nation at SGD, Margao, conducted by the Police Surgeon, confirmed the cause of death as "asphyxia due to drowning." Following the examination, the body was handed over to the family.

During the investigation, police discovered that Gaonkar was known to be a habitual consumer of alcohol. Witness accounts and findings revealed that on March 30, at approximately 8.30 pm, he was seen heading home near the canal under the influence of alcohol. It is suspected that he may have accidentally fallen into the water.

The case is under further investigation by PSI Krishnadeep Borkar of Sanguem Police Station.

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Co-op societies should start taxi service: CM

Team Herald

BICHOLIM: Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has opined that the co-operative credit societies should start taxi service in the State. "With this, the societies should employ locals and launch an app based service as it would provide jobs to local youth and also income to both," said the Chief Minister.

The chief minister also stated that the government will now ensure that a loanee of one cooperative credit society will not be allowed to obtain loan from another till the first loan amount is cleared.

Speaking during the inauguration of the new branch of the Sattari Multipurpose Cooperation Credit Society at Navelim, Sankhali, the Chief Minister said



that many times people find it difficult to travel by taxi due to high rates. He gave an example of how the air fare to Goa-Delhi was Rs 2,500 while, the taxi in the State was charging Rs 3,000. "In this case, nobody will use taxi service because of the exorbitant rate," he said calling upon the cooperative credit society to start an affordable taxi service.

Stating that all cooperative credit societies will be brought under one platform thereby giving details of the loanees, within a fortnight.

Navelim sarpanch Rohidas Kankar, panchayat member Narayan Gawas, ZP Member Gopal Surlakar, society president Vassudev Parab, vice president Krishna Gawas and board of directors were present.

Marathi protagonists demand official recognition in Language Act

Team Herald

PANJIM: The Marathi protagonists on Monday demanded official recognition for the language under the Official Language Act.

Speaking at the Nirdhar Melava, former RSS Goa Prant Sanghachalak Subhash Velingkar emphasised the need to create a strong vote bank across all 40 constituencies in the State. He disclosed plans to hold taluka-level meetings over the next three months to rally support and strengthen the political presence of the Marathi-speaking population.

Stating that official recognition for Marathi has been delayed in the State for the last 40 years, Velingkar asserted that the time had come for Marathi protagonists to move beyond being mere voters and actively build a dedicated Marathi vote bank to influ-

“Our movement is not against Konkani but is solely focused on securing justice for the Marathi language and its speakers”
— Subhash Velingkar

ence the next Assembly elections. Velingkar clarified that their movement is not against Konkani but is solely focused on securing justice for the Marathi language and its speakers. "We are not against Konkani but are fighting to give justice to Marathi," he said, urging people to support the cause and make the movement a success.

Meanwhile, Gopalrao Dhavlikar declared that the Marathi movement would now be spearheaded under Velingkar's leadership and appealed to all Marathi-speaking citizens to support him.

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